



Inferring Patterns in Network Traffic: Time Scales and Variation

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Introduction

- A method and metrics for Situational Awareness
 - SA → Monitoring trends and changes in traffic
 - Analysis over time → Time series data analysis
 - Metrics related to time series are key for SA
-
- Variations over time → Metrics for tracking
 - Time windows and time scales are important to understand and interpret the metrics

Background

- Traffic patterns and variations important
 - Engineering and performance
 - SA for security – monitoring
 - Important for anomaly detection
 - Baselines for normalcy
 - Thresholds | Inherent variations
 - Alerts – Can be based on many metrics
-
- **Metrics based on variations in traffic**

References

- Biersack, Callegari, and Matijasevic – Data Traffic Monitoring and Analysis
- Box, Jenkins and Reinsel – Time Series Analysis: Forecasting and Control
- Braun and Murdoch – A First Course in Statistical Programming with R
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- Cowpertwait and Metcalfe - Introductory Time Series with R
- Crovella and Krishnamurthy – Internet Measurement
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- Shumway and Stoffer - Time Series Analysis and its Applications

Method of Analysis

- Analysis of flow data to investigate this issue
- Construct an initial time series | W and b
- Establish a time slot τ ($b < \tau < W$)
- Estimate the standard deviations within each τ
- Estimate the std. dev. of these std. dev.s [H]
- Compare this across varying bin sizes
- Vary time window (W)
- Compare τ -s across varying W | same bin size
- Metric can be tracked over time (successive Ws)

Variance of the Variance

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	τ_1						τ_2			
	μ_1						μ_2			

Variance over time (traffic load)

Burstiness $\sim \sim$ Variance of the means

What about the variance of the variance?

=> Heteroscedasticity

Estimating Heteroscedasticity [H]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	τ_1						τ_2			
	μ_1						μ_2			
	σ_1						σ_2			

$$\sigma(\sigma_1, \sigma_2, \dots) = H$$

Important to monitor H as well.

Data and Design

- Analysis reported here was done with public domain data
- Two time windows (8 hours each)
- Two time scales ($b=4,8$ minutes)
- Analysis was done with SiLK and R
- Can be done with any flow data and scripts
- One set of comparisons shown
- A particular case of heteroscedasticity

Results

Table: Heteroscedasticity Estimates

(Overall standard deviation in parentheses)

(W1 = W2 = 8 hours; b1 = 4 min, b2 = 8 min)

Time window	Time Scale = b1	Time Scale = b2
W1	13.57 MB (26.35 MB)	33.37 MB (50.10 MB)
W2	4.47 MB (10.66 MB)	7.99 MB (19.64 MB)

Conclusions

- An attack or intrusion usually implies some shift in traffic patterns
- One indicator of such shifts could be a change in the levels of heteroscedasticity
- This methodology has the potential to detect such attacks at an early stage
- Alert when H exceeds a threshold

Benefits

- This approach could detect attacks and intrusions that do not perturb the network traffic in other discernible ways
 - Thus other techniques may not identify them early enough
 - Early detection is important for effective mitigation
-
- This method also enhances SA by introducing a new metric to track traffic patterns

Future Work

Implications of changes H w. r. t. time scales?

Repeat the analysis: wide W & different networks

Predictions from attack/intrusion models $\langle H \rangle$

Test behavior of H with data with known attacks



Thank you!

Questions/comments?

